

Item Subject: IM/RW/Talbot

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TO: The Deputy Secretary

THROUGH: P - Mr. Tarnoff

FROM: IO - George F. Ward, Jr., Acting  
AF - George E. Moose

SUBJECT: UN Security Council Action on Rwanda

SUMMARY

After the death of the Rwandan president April 6 and the ensuing violence in Kigali, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) has been on the Security Council's (UNSC) agenda daily. On April 15 we sent instructions (attachment) to USUN recommending that the Security Council withdraw UN forces from Rwanda for their safety. The Nigerians, on behalf of the NAM, circulated a resolution calling for a larger UNAMIR force, an expanded mandate including protection of Rwandans and government officials, promotion of a ceasefire and of a political settlement, and facilitation of humanitarian assistance. There is some support at the UNSC for revising the mandate, but little for expanding the force. There is no support on the Council for a total withdrawal of UNAMIR.

UNAMIR cannot fulfill its mandate under the current circumstances and is unlikely to attract personnel or obtain equipment for an expanded operation. UNAMIR is currently affording some degree of protection to 12,000 refugees in Kigali. We should not advocate (and we could not get agreement in the Security Council for) abandoning these people, nor does it seem feasible for UNAMIR forces to take the refugees with them. UNAMIR is, thus, as a practical matter, stuck in Kigali until the situation there calms sufficiently for these people

to disperse. Once this happens, however, we should urge an orderly withdrawal of all UNAMIR forces while retaining a Special Representative to broker a new ceasefire and re-start the peace process.

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We should nevertheless be prepared to support the retention of a small UNAMIR presence to provide security to the UN's Special Representative if the UNAMIR commander and Boutros-Ghali can make a credible case that such a presence would facilitate efforts to obtain a ceasefire and would not face unreasonable risks.

DISCUSSION

Following the death of the Rwandan president last week and subsequent violence which left an estimated 20,000 dead, the Security Council is discussing the role and future of UNAMIR. Our instruction cable to USUN (attachment) was fully cleared by key State offices and by JCS, OSD and NSC. It asked our mission in New York to emphasize the following points:

- o -- In the current environment in Rwanda, there is no role for a United Nations peacekeeping force.
- o -- Our opposition to retaining a UNAMIR presence...is based on our conviction that the Security Council has an obligation to ensure that peacekeeping operations are viable, that they are capable of fulfilling their mandate, and that UN peacekeeping personnel are not placed or retained, knowingly, in an untenable situation.
- o -- We are willing to support and encourage a political initiative by the Secretary General to promote reconciliation among the parties.

No Action Taken in Security Council: Taking into account the significant UNSC opposition to our proposal, we were willing to accept a British compromise resolution which would have withdrawn UNAMIR forces, suspended operations, and retained a small, interim presence headed by the Special Representative and including enough troops to ensure its protection. The Nigerians and the NAM would not go along, and there has been no decision on the future of UNAMIR. The 450-man Belgian contingent has, however, pulled out.

UNAMIR Unable to Deter Violence: Intense fighting continues in Rwanda, especially in and around Kigali, where most of UNAMIR is located. No decision has meant that the force remains and runs the risk of being drawn into an ever more dangerous situation. There is little evidence that the presence of UNAMIR troops is serving as a deterrent in Kigali;

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it did not deter the outbreak of violence, nor is it significantly curbing the violence. We have received reports that the stadium where UNAMIR is protecting several thousand Rwandans was hit by rocket fire today.

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To further complicate UNAMIR's withdrawal, 12,000 Rwandans have taken refuge with UNAMIR. Although UNAMIR's lightly armed forces could not protect them from an army assault, the presence of UNAMIR forces has protected them from the sort of mob violence that has killed many in the past week. These civilians cannot stay with UNAMIR indefinitely as sanitation and food supplies pose problems. Any plan to withdraw UNAMIR forces must include finding a way to move these people to safety to prevent more massacres or violence against UNAMIR by those who feel they are being abandoned.

Changing the Mandate: We should continue to resist efforts to change and broaden UNAMIR's mandate. There are no signs of compromise, and the fighting continues. Given UNAMIR's current size and its light armament, the force cannot carry out a revised mandate that might include, for example, protection of endangered Rwandans or of government buildings and officials. There is little support either in the Security Council or in the USG for enlarging or upgrading UNAMIR, changes that would have to accompany a new mandate.

With renewed fighting, UNAMIR can no longer perform its main function -- monitoring the cease fire and facilitating the implementation of the Arusha peace accords. The United Nations continues to have a role to play in Rwanda, but it is one of political reconciliation, not peacekeeping. Even if the UNSC expanded the mandate and found additional forces capable of protecting the Rwanda population, it would be difficult to meet a key goal of peacekeeping operations: realistic criteria for ending the operation. The only appropriate role for the UN is to continue to try to broker a ceasefire and relaunch the peace process.

Attachment:

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